

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
DATE: 10TH JULY 2019
REPORT OF: HEAD OF OPERATIONAL POLICY AND ASSURANCE
AUTHOR: SM HUW COATES

SUBJECT: NORTH WEST FIRE CONTROL – ANNUAL
REPORT 2018-19

Purpose of Report

1. To inform Members about the performance of North West Fire Control (NWFC) during the year 2018-19 (1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019).

Recommended: That

- [1] Members note the performance information relating to North West Fire Control.

Background

2. This report is based on the Quarterly Performance Management reports produced by NWFC.

Information

Mobilising System Performance

Availability

3. NWFC relies upon the call handling and mobilising system in order to provide an effective, efficient service. The contract for the system contains a requirement for the system to be available for 99.9% of the time, measured on an annual basis. Performance is shown in the table below. Availability for the year 2018-19 was 100%.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Availability	100%	100%	100%	100%

Faults

4. The contract for the system categorises faults by severity and includes target times to remedy the different fault categories. Category One faults are those that cause a total loss of availability of the system or a material deterioration of operational effectiveness (to such an extent that NWFC is

unable to deliver all or part of its service). The target time to fix a Category One fault is 6 hours. The definition of Category Two faults includes the terms 'material malfunction' and 'material deterioration in ... operational effectiveness'. Category Three faults involve minor impacts to the system and/or operational effectiveness.

5. Performance is shown in the table below.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Category One	2	2	1	0
Category Two	22	16	13	7
Category Three	58	61	107	68

6. Compared to 2017-18 there is an increase in Category One faults, (5 in 2018-19 compared to 2 in the previous year). On further investigation, these faults included 1 which was incorrectly reported, with the other 4 involving the backup and archive interfaces based in Stretford and which did not result in the loss of system availability. Category Two faults have remained at a constant level with a decrease in Category Three faults.

Speed

7. The system needs to operate quickly. The performance standard in the contract is complex. The contract requires actions (referred to contractually as 'transactions') that are carried out by the system to be completed within a range of very short periods (e.g. less than one second to load the gazetteer address information on 95% of occasions).
8. Performance is shown in the table below.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Total no. of transactions	162,462	165,229	133,219	133,667
No. failed to meet standard	82 (0.05%)	84 (0.05%)	222 (0.16%)	377 (0.28%)
Average transaction speed	0.25 seconds	0.25 seconds	0.26 seconds	0.26 seconds

9. These figures show no change in the average transaction speed compared to last year but a slight increase in the total number that failed to meet the standard. However, the performance remains within the required contractual standards.

Call Handling and Mobilising Performance

Time to Answer Emergency Calls

10. A national target was recommended by CFOA and it is against this target that NWFC has been reporting. The target is 95% of emergency calls should be answered in 10 seconds, or less.
11. Performance is shown in the table below.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Percentage of calls answered within 10 seconds	94.91%	86.20%	94.89%	94.93%

Notes: Q2 Included a period of 'spate' conditions due to the moorland fires

Time of Call Answer to Time of Alerting the First Resources for all Emergency Calls

12. A national target was recommended by CFOA and it is against this target that NWFC reports. The target is for resources to be mobilised within 90 seconds of a call. Obviously, this only relates to calls where a mobilisation is necessary.
13. Performance is shown in the table below (average in seconds).

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Call to Alert in Seconds	104	105	105	102

14. As can be seen NWFC has been unable to meet the target (a difference of between 8 and 15 seconds) in each quarter. However, they have recorded incremental improvements in this measure for the past 2 years. NWFC and the relevant fire and rescue services continue to work together with a view to achieving a reduction in the time taken to mobilise resources. Ongoing work is taking place to further converge working practices and streamline pre-mobilising actions to enable resources to be mobilised quicker.
15. The table above shows a measure of all 'attended' incidents with the following omissions:
 - Any incident classified as IRS or NWFC 'Other' – these are predominantly test and admin incidents some of which do not feed into the Fire Service Incident Recording Systems
 - Chemical Suicide
 - Concern for Welfare
 - Gaining Entry

- Calls to Assist Other Agencies Non-Life Risk (i.e. Police or Ambulance)
- Suspect Package/White Powder/Bomb
- Arson Threat
- Threatening to Jump (from height or into water)
- Attendance to be made to a non-critical incident within 2 hours

16. These incident types have been removed due to them not requiring immediate attendance or where consultation with an officer is necessary to determine the required attendance.

Costs of Service

Percentage of Incidents by FRS 2018/2019

17. The cost of the service provided by NWFC is paid for in proportions agreed by the FRSs.
18. The table below shows the percentage of activities in each quarter per FRS area and then contains the overall percentage for the year compared to the cost paid by each FRS. As previously, the figures show a very close alignment between activity and cost.

	Cheshire	Cumbria	Greater Manchester	Lancashire
Q1	16.62%	7.08%	50.03%	24.98%
Q2	17.18%	7.27%	49.72%	24.35%
Q3	18.35%	7.71%	47.07%	25.98%
Q4	18.08%	7.77%	47.36%	25.83%
Overall Average	17.55%	7.45%	48.54%	25.28%
Annual Percentage of Cost per FRS	18%	8%	48.5%	25.5%

N.B. The overall average figures do not add up to 100 as there is a small proportion of 'other' calls that are not accounted for in the table.

Staff Performance

19. CFRS staff regularly attend NWFC. Their observations form an important aspect of performance monitoring as they can take a view about aspects of the service provided by NWFC that are not measured statistically, e.g. the approach to call handling. There is close working for significant events and during certain periods, e.g. major disruption such as flooding and during the bonfire period. On the whole, the staff at NWFC continue to work well with the vast majority of calls leading to the correct mobilisation of resources. Systems and people are fully tested when conditions are the most challenging and staff at NWFC worked well on each occasion. There are clear channels through which to communicate feedback between operational crews within CFRS and staff in NWFC.
20. NWFC continues to take the training and improvement of the skills of its staff very seriously. This is evident from the management and integration of new starters and approach to the ongoing maintenance and improvement of skills. NWFC now use the same Competence Management and eLearning system as CFRS, PDRPro.
21. Performance statistics are also considered by Team Leaders so that they can see how well their team members are performing and where additional help or training may be required. Individual performance also provides evidence for appraisals and is considered when performance related pay is determined.

Business Continuity

22. Two full business continuity exercises have been carried out at NWFC during the reporting period (Exercise Highway in February 2019 and Exercise Gateway in August 2018). Both exercises took place whilst there was a complete shut down of the mobilising system, necessitated by a requirement to complete essential updates. Business Continuity arrangements are now fully embedded at NWFC with an effective management system in place.

Financial Implications

23. The arrangement continues to deliver significant savings to the Authority. Compared with historic costs of operating an FRS Control, the arrangement with NWFC produced a saving of approximately 300k for 2018/2019.

Legal Implications

24. None resulting from the information in the report. An agreement for services exists between the Authority and NW Fire Control Ltd. This provides a framework for managing the relationship.

Equality and Diversity Implications

25. None

Environmental Implications

26. None

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